

Atriplex obovata Badland Sparse Vegetation

MAP CLASS	Mound Saltbush Badlands Sparse Vegetation
COMMON NAME	Mound Saltbush Badland Sparse Vegetation
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS	Sparse Vegetation (VII)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS	Unconsolidated material sparse vegetation (VII.C)
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP	Sparsely vegetated soil slopes (VII.C.3)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBGROUP	Natural/Semi-natural (VII.C.3.N.)
FORMATION	Dry slopes (VII.C.3.N.b)
ALLIANCE	Painted Desert Sparsely Vegetated Alliance

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL Weak

USFS WETLAND SYSTEM Upland

RANGE

Wupatki National Monument

Mound Saltbush Badland Sparse Vegetation is a uncommon association within Wupatki NM. Of the six relevés sampled, it was mainly located in the environs in sparse badland habitats on the Navajo Nation on the eastern section of the mapping area.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

Wupatki National Monument

This association's elevation ranged from 4,265-4,495 ft (1,300-1,370 m) (average 4,331 ft/1,320 m). The topography consisted of flat areas with 0-10% slope (average 3%). The substrate in the badlands included clay, sandstone, and pebble plains.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Wupatki National Monument

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Shrub	<i>Atriplex obovata</i>
Herbaceous	<i>Salsola tragus</i>

ASSOCIATED SPECIES

Wupatki National Monument

Atriplex canescens, *Opuntia macrorhiza*, *Sphaeralcea hastulata*, *Sporobolus airoides*

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

Wupatki National Monument

Mound Saltbush Badland Sparse Vegetation total vegetation cover was 3-23% (average 11%) with 2-16% (average 6%) in the shrub layer and 1-9% (average 5%) in the herbaceous layer. The total species diversity was low and ranged from 4-7 species (average 6) within the 6 relevés sampled.

The vegetation was dominated by *Atriplex obovata* in the shrub layer with 0.5-17% absolute cover (average 5%) or *Salsola tragus* in the herbaceous layer with 0.5-7% absolute cover (average 5%). As this is a sparse type, total cover was generally less than 15%. The invasive non-native annual *Salsola tragus* can vary in percent cover, and may occur with higher cover than *Atriplex obovata*. Both *Atriplex obovata* and *Salsola tragus* must both be present, even in trace amounts, to be classified in this association.

CONSERVATION RANK G?

DATABASE CODE CEG002928

USGS-NPS Vegetation Mapping Program
Wupatki National Monument

MAP CLASSES

The association Mound Saltbush Badland Sparse Vegetation is represented by map class Mound Saltbush Badlands Sparse Vegetation (map code 4).

The Mound Saltbush Badlands Sparse Vegetation was mapped only in the project environs. The total area in the park environs is 3,304 ac (1,337 ha) within 29 map classes.

COMMENTS

Wupatki National Monument

Salsola tragus is a non-native annual species that is adventitious from Asia (Welsh et al. 1987). This species is widespread in North America and thrives in disturbed habitats (Welsh et al. 1987). The dominance of *Salsola tragus* in the association Mound Saltbush Badland Sparse Vegetation may result from the degree of human disturbance within this sparsely vegetated association.